For about seven
221 months these bands go wandering across the prairie in search of small
● [222] game, small animals such as caterpillars, spiders, grasshoppers, rodents, snakes, lizards, and so forth, and fruits, grains, roots or wild honey—in short, all that might keep them from dying of hunger. Their camps, set up for one or several days, sometimes for several weeks, consist of as many temporary shelters as families, made of palms or branches stuck in a semi-circle in the sand and connected at the top. This is the period when the quest for food absorbs all activities. The women equip themselves with digging sticks and
221 411 184 the men hunt with the bow and arrow, of which several types must be distinguished. The eastern groups have a bow with a flat section which evolves toward a convex-plane section or a concave-convex section when one moves westward. As for the arrows, those made for hunting birds have a blunted tip. Arrows for fish have three to five points, each one formed like a minute harpoon, and the stem is without barb. The poisoned arrows (1), whose tip is protected [15]

1. See below, p. 95.

by a sheath of bamboo, are reserved for hunting monkeys and small game. Those for large game have a long lanceolate point. The barb is attached or sewed on. Besides the bow and arrow, the men use a club
[189] which often takes the form of a javelin, and its use is reserved for magic and war operations (1).

1. Cf. below, p. 99.

824 The primary materials of the indigenous industry consist of varied
825 woods, wax from wild bees, resin, fibers of the buriti palm trees (Mauritia vinifera) and tucum (Astrocaryum tucuma) bone of the monkey, teeth and claws of mammals, fur (only to make ornaments), feathers, quills of porcupines, vegetable shells and river shells, stones,
412 cotton and grains. As implements they have knives made from a sharp piece of bamboo, from stones crudely fashioned, or from fragments of iron or steel obtained through exchange, and fixed with the aid of wax and cord between two pieces of wood forming the handle. Drills are made of a borer of stone or iron mounted at the end of a stick
[77] which they turn between their palms. The Rondon Commission expanded the use of axes and metal hammers, and the old stone axes serve now only as small anvil blocks for fashioning shell or bone.
[418] The use of stone polishers must also be mentioned and, among the objects of current usage, the spindles, combs, baskets and gourds to carry water.

622 and oxen for carrying could pass. The provisions of manioc proved to be insufficient and one morning the little band found itself without anything to eat. Our own attempts to kill some animal were in vain, and the worst [88] bad humor began to reign, the chief of the group being obviously held responsible for an affair which we, he and I, had contrived. In place of undertaking a hunting or collecting expedition, each one decided to go to sleep in the shade of shelters, and they left the chief alone to find the solution to the problem. He disappeared, accompanied by one of his wives (his first wife a2, contrary to usual procedure; but a3 and a4 shared the general irritation) and toward evening both were seen reappearing, their heavy baskets filled with grasshoppers which they had spent the entire day catching. Although grasshopper pie is not a particularly esteemed dish, everyone ate with good appetite and found his good humor again. They took up the journey again the next morning.

But other things than these exceptional relief measures are expected of the chief. He must sing and dance willingly and well, and be capable of animating the collective life. He must organize the work in the most reasonable way in order to eliminate useless fatigue and effort. Thus on the eve of a departure, B1 recites for us his order of march:

30. mãdotige mãdohadhudne hajtehãdige nãnjehnile
gietnonãnahara jãuehara kanahanĩndeere hinkãnaha
iinãamnje ãkeena iinamnje ihikoro ihikoro. (b1)
When it is hot, one is tired, one is hungry, the
children walk badly; when one marches at dawn,
one marches well, at dawn, one should march, change
routes, march; on the way! on the way!

He must also win over his companions by numerous gifts. According to B1, who gives in willingly to the servitude of power, generosity plays a fundamental role in determining the degree of popularity which the new chief will enjoy, and the companions indulge in all sorts of speculations:

31. uiliki abeni ãnire tunumẽntutnuiliki agnhãnare
iunũriani (b-1)
The chief is leaving; the one who will come will give me
a great deal.--"Chief! Be generous! Give to me!"

The presents thus anticipated consist of food or objects which the chief will have made himself with the assistance of his polygamous wives, or that he will have procured by good exchanges with neighboring bands, or which might come from war booty. Often, it seems,

796

alãgena hãjtige (b1)
to sing in the place.

534 A very strict taboo rests on the flageolets. Only the adult
784 men can play them:

46. ũĩtnore ũĩtnia imãgare.
Children do not know how to play the flageolet.

And the sight of the instruments is rigorously forbidden the women:

denaãtie iatiaeninĩnena ednaio iãneni (b1)
the women cannot see them, only the men see.

These flageolets are made in great secrecy, in the same place where they find suitable bamboo. If the musical expedition returns by day, they hide the flageolets in the branches of a tree not far from the camp or from the village. They only bring them out at night, at the moment of the concert, and the women must then retire to the huts or under the shelters, and hide their heads in
[688] their arms. If one of them violates the taboo, they claim she would be pursued by all the men and killed by blows of a stick. We did not have the chance to attend one of these festivals, but, as we desired to collect the musical repertory of the flageolets, we were able, with a certain amount of difficulty, to arrange it so that a mission was sent to find bamboo and make instruments for us (it was necessary to go about 15 kilometers). Having left in the morning, the group returned in the middle of the night, and until daylight we made music some distance from the camp in order to avoid all feminine indis-
[534] cretion. As each instrument sounds a little different from the others, the playing produces an illusion of harmony which is added to the charm of the melody, in itself very real.

534 It is possible that all the musical instruments of the Nambikwara
784 are connected to activities of an economic-social character. Some testimonials, a decisive confirmation of which I was not able to obtain, present the nasal flutes (arãtasu, a2) as meant to assure a rich harvest of the fruit piquy. The season of piquy, which grows in
● [222] abundance in the plains, is actually an impatiently awaited period for the Indians. The fruit is admiringly weighed and said to have "lots of fat." Likewise the flutes of Pan (asinzu, a1; inauzere, b1) would be employed in the rites preceding hunting expeditions. In
[192] the case of nasal flutes, a double analogy has been pointed out by certain informants between their form and that [106] of the pit of the piquy, and between their name and the name of the piquy (ahãru, a 1/2). The latter analogy exists only in the eastern dialect

[End Plate IV]

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[432
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[231
342]
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1. Return from the bath. 2. Native C11 leaving for a solitary hunting expedition. 3-4. Camp life (cf. p. 16). 5. Little girl looking for edible roots and carrying a little monkey (Lagothrix sp.) on her head. 6. The two little girls a8 and a9 (cf. p. 42).

2: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939)1948
SP17 Nambicuara SP17

101 197 *Nambicuara* (Roquette-Pinto's *Uaintaçu*, which includes his *Kabishi*, *Tagnani*, *Tauitê*, *Tarutê*, and *Tashuitê*) between the Guaporé River Basin in the south and the Tenente Marqués, Iké and Roosevelt Rivers in the north and northwest; *Western Nambicuara* (new), closely related to the central and southern groups and living on the headwaters and in the upper basin of the Roosevelt River; and *Northern Nambicuara* (new), speaking its own language and living north of the central group.

101 The Indians mention other tribes north of the *Nambicuara;* one called *Saluma*, *Saruma*, or *Solondé* is almost certainly the *Mundurucú;* another may be the *Tapanyuna*.

161 In 1907, Rondón estimated the total *Nambicuara* population to be 20,000. In 1912 Roquette-Pinto met 1,000 to 1,500. It is doubtful whether the total population, which has been decimated by several recent epidemics, now greatly exceeds 1,500.

197 193 The *Nambicuara* language was previously thought to be isolated, but its distinctive trait—the use of classificatory suffixes dividing the universe into about ten categories—is strongly reminiscent of *Chibcha*.

101 *Nambicuara* culture, although less primitive than that of the *Sirionó* to the southwest, is strikingly simple in comparison with that of the neighboring *Paressí* to the southeast and of the *Tupi-Cawahib* to the northwest. Their lack of the hammock, their custom of sleeping on the ground, their crude ceramics (the *Eastern Nambicuara* entirely lack pottery), the nakedness of both sexes, their nomadism, their use of temporary shelters during most of the year, the general poverty of their material culture, and the simplicity of their social organization distinguish them from the higher cultures of the Guaporé River area, to which they nevertheless probably belong.

CULTURE

SUBSISTENCE

133 134 137 The *Nambicuara* habitat is a savannalike plateau about 500 to 1,500 feet (150 to 500 m.) above sea level with an arenaceous soil which comes from disintegrated sandstone bedrock. Except for narrow gallery forests along river banks, the region is infertile, having only shrubs and small trees with thorns or thick bark.

221 In this unproductive environment the *Nambicuara* have a dual subsistence pattern. They are both seminomadic bush dwellers and incipient farmers. During the dry season, women, accompanied by their children, [224 222] forage with digging sticks for wild fruits, seeds, and roots, and catch grubs, rats, bats, spiders, snakes, lizards, and other small creatures, while men hunt what large game they can find with bows and arrows and collect wild honey.

3: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
SP17 Nambicuara SP17

Gardening exists only during the rainy season and does not free the Nambikuara from wandering during the seven months of the dry season, looking for wild roots, fruits and seeds, small animals such as lizards, snakes, bats, spiders and grasshoppers and, generally speaking, anything which may prevent them from starving. As a matter of fact, their geographical surroundings, which are located in the northwestern part of the state of Mato Grosso and include the headwaters of the Tapajos, Rio Roosevelt and Rio Gi-Parana, consist of a desolated savanna with few vegetal resources and still less game.

Had I approached my subject from a point of view other than the one outlined above, I could not have avoided a long discussion in South American cultural history, aimed at clearing up this apparent primitiveness, on the question as to whether the survival of early conditions of life in South America is genuine or whether we should consider it as a more recent—although undoubtedly pre-columbian—result of culture clashes and processes of acculturation. Whatever the answer may be, it cannot substantially change our problem: whether tarriant or recessive, the Nambikuara society functions, in the present, as one of the simplest forms of human society to be conceived. We shall not seek information from the particular history which kept them in their exceptionally crude organisation or brought them back to it. We shall only look at the experiment in social anthropology which they now enact under our very eyes.

This holds especially true in respect to their social and political life. For if we do not know what was the material culture of the Nambikuara forty years ago (they were discovered only in 1907), we do know that their numbers became tremendously reduced after their contact with white civilization. General (then Colonel) Candido Mariano da Silva Rondon, who discovered and studied them, first stated that their number was about 20,000. This was around 1915. I take this figure as greatly exaggerated, but even if reduced by one half, it considerably exceeds the present number which is hardly more than 2,000. Epidemics have taken care of the difference. What does this mean, from the point of view of our study? During the dry season, the Nambikuara live in nomadic bands, each one under the leadership of a chief, who, during the sedentary life of the rainy months, may be either a village chief or a person of position. General Rondon wrote that, at the time he was exploring the country, it was not rare to see bands averaging two or three hundred individuals. Now, sixty or seventy

4: Oberg E-5 (1949)1953
SP17 Nambicuara SP17

Vilhena. These Indian Posts have had only limited success in attracting the Nambicuara, because the region is agriculturally so poor that it is difficult to grow enough food to maintain a settled population, and at present the Indians only visit these posts occasionally.

Intensive missionary activity among the Nambicuara began when two American Protestant missionaries, Arthur F. Tylee and William R. Henricks, established a mission station at Juruena in 1925. In October 1930, the Reverend Mr. Tylee, his baby daughter, Miss Mildred Kratz (nurse), and three Brazilians employed by the mission were killed by the Nambicuara belonging to Julio's band. Mrs. Tylee, although struck three or four times on the head while rushing to her child who was still in bed, was only stunned and came to after the Indians had left. One Brazilian hired man escaped to get help from the telegraph station. Some years later new Protestant missions were established at Campos Novos (Nambicuaras) and at Utiarity. At present only the mission station at Utiarity is in operation.

The Jesuits established a mission at Juruena about 1930, but in 1940 moved it to its present site in Utiarity. Today both the Protestant and Catholic missions are, therefore, located in Utiarity, which not only is connected by truck road to Cuiabá but is also centrally located. To the east and south are the remnants of the Paressí, and to the north, the Iranxe, who, although not speaking the Paressí language, appear to belong to the Arawak-speaking family. Further northward are tribes with which the missionaries are planning to make contacts. To the west are the Nambicuara. Although officially on friendly terms there is considerable tension between the Protestant and Catholic missionaries, as they are competing for the allegiance of the same Indian population.

ECONOMY

Although the Nambicuara practice a shifting agriculture, their dependence upon the wild animal and plant life of the region is so extensive that they might well be classed as nomadic hunters and collectors. The semiarid plateau provides little in the way of agricultural land, game, or fish. What little farming is practiced is carried on in the narrow "galeria" forests of the headwater streams.

[p. 87 (1)]

The Wakitisu do not
323 make pottery, but they sometimes acquire pots from the Paresi in exchange for game or fish.

HUNTING, FISHING, AND COLLECTING

621 Today, at least, the Wakitisu band is a producing and consuming unit. Whatever a man or his family gathers is shared among the band. This, however, does not mean that the whole band goes out every day or that they keep together while out hunting, fishing, and collecting. Except
594 when the men go hunting such large game as the jaguar, tapir, and peccary, the acquisitive unit is the family. Every morning while Julio's band was camped in Utiarity a family or two could be seen going out, the husband walking in front armed with bow and arrows, the wife following
[482 and carrying a burden basket on her back and a
854] baby strapped on her hip, an older child following her. As they move slowly along they collect
222 fruits, nuts, insects, snakes, ants, lizards, rats, wild honey, and a great variety of grubs or larvae.
226 When they come to a pond they wade around with small baskets in their hands and scoop out small fish. On one of these trips I observed them
[252 catching fish that were only 2 inches in length.
262] These were later thrown on hot coals and eaten without being cleaned. Small birds no larger
223 than a sparrow are shot if the man can get near
222 enough to use his bow and arrow. If they come
[314] to a buriti stalk of the right size they will cut it down, put it into the burden basket, and take it
313 to camp. On their way home they will usually pick up dry firewood. Thus, when a family returns at nightfall the basket will be full of a wide assortment of foods and useful materials.

224 Monkeys, deer, and large birds are generally
[177] stalked by a single hunter, particularly if he has a gun. Julio and Marciano each owned a shotgun and quite often hunted alone. If a man goes out in the morning and runs onto a group of peccaries he will hurry back to camp, and all the men will then go to where the peccaries are feeding. When they hear the peccaries the hunters will form into three files, one heading directly toward the pigs, the other two flanking the game on each side. When near enough the middle file stops and spreads out, the other two files then slowly surround the pigs. As the flanking movement is going on the pigs sometimes move, but the middle group of hunters maintains contact

241 but the method of felling is the same. All clearing has to be completed by the end of June to permit the felled trees to dry.

In late August, when the cicada begins to sing and the first thunder is heard, the Nambicuara return to undertake their planting activities. At a given signal, men with lighted bunches of dry grass set fire to dry trees and bushes all around the edges of the field. The rest of the people are concentrated at the river's edge at the bottom of the slope, and as animals, such as rats, lizards, and snakes, flee toward the water they kill them. ●[222] After the fires have died down the people go through the field collecting grubs, insects, and whatever else that is edible.

Among the stumps and unburnt logs the Nambicuara hoe up hills about 3 feet in diameter into which they stick 6 or 7 pieces of last season's manioc stems, each about 10 inches long. These hills are made about 5 or 6 feet apart. Formerly they used a digging stick (*kadikdáru*) but today the metal hoe (*iɔakúlusu*) is used. Bitter manioc (*wulídnsu*) is their most important crop.

After the rains have begun and the manioc is several inches high, they begin to plant maize (*kaydtsu*) of which the Nambicuara have several varieties. Maize is planted between the manioc hills by making a hole in the ground with a digging stick into which 2 seeds are dropped. As the holes are about 6 inches deep, the seeds are not covered. Whether this is to protect the seeds from birds is not clear.

When the maize has grown tall enough to provide shade they plant beans (*kaɔ́'su*), sweetpotatoes (*wísu*), and tobacco (*ítsu*). The bean which the Nambicuara grow looks like a large red kidney bean and has a tough skin. Beans are planted one seed to a shallow hole and covered. Sweetpotatoes are planted by placing cuttings in shallow trenches near logs and stumps. When 249 planting tobacco a man places a handful of seeds on a leaf, climbs onto a high stump, and blows the fine seeds so that they scatter over the field. They weed the field only once when the maize is 248 about a foot or two in height. Cotton is planted in the field but urucú bushes and gourds are planted near the houses. After the planting is finished and the field is growing well the people leave on their continuous rounds of hunting, fishing, and collecting.

[p. 91 (A)]

342 The external layers cover the whole building, like very precise and well clipped sheets of straw. The side walls are not distinct from the roof, but mere extensions of it.

Of the two houses we have described, in the village close to the Carumi (or Festa da Bandeira) River, the larger covers 30 meters in circumference, the other 28. Their doorways measure 0.37 meters in width by 0.52 meters in height. These two houses stand on a plaza some twenty meters in diameter.

352 Inside the huts stand three bamboo grids [giraus] to dry manioc
354 scrapings, and two enormous black pots which could not have come
[352] through the doors; lighter utensils and various other implements, as well as ornaments, are kept in the ceiling thatch. This serves as the Indians' closet, where they hide their smaller belongings. [Fig. 24]

354 A small fire burns underneath each grid.

These grids were made up of four bamboo stalks sunk into the ground and supporting a horizontal grate of small bamboo reeds. They measured about two meters in length by one and a half in width.

The huts are not equipped with any smoke holes, and none are needed. The smoke of inside fires filters easily through the interstices of the thatch.

356 Around the dwelling, scattered or in heaps, lie disjointed bones, fragmented coconuts, pods of the jatobá bean, corn cobs, charcoal, and food refuse, mixed with worn-out tools and utensils.

412 In the village on the Festa da Bandeira River, I found beside a house a large object which I only failed to bring back because it would have been absolutely impossible to transport it. It was of a kind commonly found in the sambaquis [224] of the Atlantic coast: a rock pitted with several depressions large enough to hold a fingertip. To
[222 one side lay a prodigious quantity of small bacaba nuts, both shelled
262] and unshelled. It has often been inferred that this implement was used to produce fires, but in the Serra do Norte it merely serves to shell palm nuts. This stone, however, was much larger than those generally encountered in the sambaquis.

342 The temporary shelter consists of a screen of leaves and branches. The Indians may use it for a few days if hunting in the area is good; then they abandon it.